



Ambassador John Berry – Australian National University

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**Commemorating the Signing of the  
Paris Climate Change Agreement  
The Australian National University, Canberra**

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The Paris Agreement is a testament to our tenacity in the face of complicated, interconnected global challenges. When countries work toward a common purpose, almost anything is possible.

In the 1970s, the widespread use of chlorofluorocarbons or CFCs had rapidly depleted the ozone layer. In response, the countries of the world came together to ban CFCs. The resulting Montreal Protocol averted catastrophe.

Last year in Paris, faced with the indisputable consequences of climate change, we once again came together to avert catastrophe. The Paris Agreement on Climate Change is a historic, enduring agreement that sets the world on a course to a low-carbon future. A safer, healthier, and more sustainable future.

The French government exercised tremendous leadership during its presidency of COP-21; without which this agreement would have been impossible. Thank you Ambassador Lecourtier. And, thank you to all the governments represented here today who played vital roles in Paris.

We can all be proud of our combined efforts. The nearly 200 countries party to the negotiations committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and building resilience and adaptation. They committed to unprecedented transparency and accountability. But the joint announcement of U.S. and Chinese intended reductions in September was pivotal, as together our two nations account for over one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions. The United States and China will both sign the agreement tomorrow in New York. Our actions on climate change prove the United States and China can both compete and cooperate.

The United States' ambitious national commitment is a 26-28 percent reduction in emissions over the 20 years between 2005 and 2025. U.S. actions to achieve this target will result in a roll back of our emissions to what they were in 2000.

To start to meet this goal, the United States has cut our total carbon pollution more than any other country on earth. In 2016, America's carbon emissions are down 10 percent from what they were in 2005. We are currently emitting less than we have in two decades. We have reduced public funding for carbon-based power plants. We have tripled wind power generation and multiplied solar power generation 30 times over. And, we contribute more than \$2.5 billion to climate finance every year.



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At the end of the day, the Paris Agreement is prologue. It is only the beginning of what we can achieve if we continue to work together. That is why we are calling on every country to join or ratify the Paris Agreement, pursue ambitious national carbon emission targets, and innovate for clean energy solutions. We also must move faster.

Why faster? Thirty years ago, scientists predicted that the ozone layer would be fully restored within 10 years. As anyone who has dared go outside in Australia without a hat and SPF 50 knows, the healing of the ozone layer needs more time.

If we redouble our efforts to reach national targets even sooner, we can give nature the extra time it needs to adapt and to heal, and improve our chances for success. Let us, together, speed that healing process.

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